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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1465th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 1 August 1996, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. SAMANA (Papua New Guinea)
(Acting Chairman)

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CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

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The meeting was called to order at 11.20 a.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS (A/51/212; E/1996/85; A/AC.109/L.1853 AND L.1854)

1. The ACTING CHAIRMAN, reporting on his participation in the meetings of the Economic and Social Council at which the item under consideration had been discussed, said that in his statement to the Council he had recalled the close cooperation that the Council, the Special Committee and organizations within the United Nations system had maintained over the years and the benefits that it had brought to the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. He had stressed that, despite their small size and limited resources, the Territories were entitled to exercise their rights to self-determination and independence, and he had reiterated the Special Committee's conviction that accelerated economic and social development would contribute to the swift implementation of the General Assembly resolution in those Territories.

2. He had also informed the Council about the Pacific Regional Seminar held recently at Port Moresby and had expressed the hope that the Council would continue coordinating the policies and activities of the United Nations system concerning the Territories. He had emphasized that since the mid-point of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism had already been crossed, the time had come for a concerted effort to achieve the goals set forth in the Declaration. The time had also come for all international institutions to increase their assistance to the Territories. He had conveyed the Special Committee's appreciation to the United Nations Development Programme and other specialized agencies for their contributions to the development of the Territories concerned, as well as the Special Committee's appeal to the administering Powers to help the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

3. Finally, he said that the draft resolution which he had introduced in the Council had been adopted by 29 votes to none, with 20 abstentions.

4. At the invitation of the Acting Chairman, Mr. Corbin (United Nations Association of the Virgin Islands) took a place at the petitioners' table.

5. Mr. CORBIN (United Nations Association of the Virgin Islands) said that creation by a number of specialized agencies of associate membership or observer status for Self-Governing Territories helped to enhance the human resources of the territorial Governments in their socio-economic development process and that the inclusion of the Territories in the regional programmes of United Nations bodies was also an important way of providing assistance. UNAVI would support any effort to encourage the expansion of such participation in the wider United Nations system.

6. In recent years, a number of Non-Self-Governing Territories had been enabled to participate in United Nations global conferences by virtue of their associate membership in United Nations regional commissions, but the insufficient availability of resources continued to limit that participation.

It would be an appropriate role for the Committee, working within the United Nations system, to advocate increased participation by Non-Self-Governing Territories in United Nations world conferences, as well as improved access by them to voluntary funds for the purpose. The relevance of such participation to the socio-economic development process was clear, and it was a matter of concern to UNAVI that all reference to those activities had been deleted from the 1995 resolution on small Territories.

7. He recalled that in 1995, the representative of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee had introduced a proposal calling for collaboration by that Committee with the Special Committee in an attempt to implement some of the Special Committee's unfulfilled mandates. Governments and non-government organizations in the Territories had consistently advocated such collaboration, and had expressed their strong concern at the lack of response from the Special Committee. The importance of such recommendations should not be underestimated. It was puzzling that, like other recommendations of Special Committee seminars, they had not been implemented; they amounted to a comprehensive set of guidelines for the successful implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The Committee might wish to consider incorporating them into the General Assembly resolution, if only as an annex.

8. The Special Committee should take a proactive approach, engaging the Governments and non-governmental organizations of the Territories in serious and sustained dialogue, and utilizing the tools at the Committee's disposal, through formal linkages with other United Nations bodies as well as with regional and non-governmental organizations.

9. Mr. AL-ATTAR (Syrian Arab Republic) said that it would be useful if petitioners could provide more information about the territories that they represented, particularly regarding recent developments and their social and political situation.

10. Mr. Corbin withdrew.

11. The ACTING CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1854

12. Mr. CHTCHERBAK (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Federation would not oppose the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus, but that if a vote were held, his delegation would be obliged to abstain.

13. Mr. TANOH-BOUTCHOUE (Côte d'Ivoire) drew attention to an error in paragraph 19 of the French text.

14. Mr. RIVERO ROSARIO (Cuba) proposed that the words "contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960" should be added to the end of the fifth preambular paragraph.

15. The draft resolution, as orally amended, was adopted.

16. The ACTING CHAIRMAN remarked that despite the Organization's financial difficulties and the resulting downsizing of services to the Special Committee, the latter, had finished its work on time. It had continued to express concern about the lack of up-to-date information on the Non-Self-Governing Territories from the administering Powers. In the absence of visiting missions the cooperation of the administering Powers was especially crucial so as to enable the Committee to fulfil its mandate and eradicate colonialism by the year 2000. At the same time, the Special Committee had continued to pay particular attention to the information provided by representatives of the Territories.

17. Finally, after expressing his appreciation on behalf of the Special Committee, for the cooperation demonstrated by the administering Powers that had participated in its work, and by New Zealand in particular, he declared the 1996 session closed.

The meeting rose at noon.